

REMARKS

Responses to the rejections and objections stated in the Office Action are set forth below in paragraphs correspondingly to the Office Action.

Claim Objections

Office Action ¶ 1: Claims 1-2, 9, and 16-17 were objected to for informalities.

Claims 1-2, 9, and 16-17 were objected to for informalities relating to usage of “a,” “the,” and “said.” Correction has been achieved by amendments above.

Claim Rejections

Office Action ¶¶ 2-3: Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-18, and 21-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-18, and 21-22 were rejected as obvious over the combination of some unspecified “Applicant submitted Prior Art” (“APA” herein, as in the Office Action) in view of Zhu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,404,954). The APA and Zhu disclose that the outer holder and inner holder are made of glass. APA discloses that only the fiber holder is secured to the inner holder. However, neither APA nor Zhu teaches that both the optical fiber holder and lens are secured to the inner holder.

The effect of “the optical fiber holder and lens [being] secured to the inner holder” is described in the original specification page 7, line 34 to page 8, line 12. When the fiber holder and lens are directly secured to the inner holder in a manner as described in APA, the following problems often occur. When contacting optical parts are secured by applying adhesive on peripheral surface of the parts, the adhesive infiltrates into a gap between the parts. If the infiltrated adhesive reaches the optical path, optical loss increases. In addition, the thermal expansion or shrinkage of the infiltrated adhesive due to the temperature variation generates

collision or displacement of the parts, which also increase optical loss. According to the present invention, the infiltration of the adhesive and increasing optical loss can be prevented by the optical fiber holder and lens being secured to the inner holder.

All independent claims (1, 6, and 14-16) have been amended herein to incorporate the added limitation which was just mentioned, but which is not found in the cited art. It is therefore believed that the rejection of all pending claims has been obviated.

The Zhu '954 reference is not prior art to several claims presented in this application.

With respect to all rejections in the Office Action, it is respectfully submitted that the Zhu '954 patent should be removed as a reference. At least Claims 6-9 and 13-15, as presented in Applicants' Amendment of February 23, 2004, are supported by the specification of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-209135, which has a priority date of July 10, 2000. The Zhu reference's priority date of August 31, 2000 is subsequent. Consequently, Applicants request that the rejections of those claims stated in the Office Action be withdrawn.

Office Action ¶ 4: Claims 10 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 10 and 19 were rejected as obvious over the combination of APA, the Zhu '954 patent, and Pan (U.S. Patent No. 5,359,683). As discussed above, Claims 6 and 16 (the parent claims to Claims 10 and 19) have been amended and distinguish over the cited art. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the rejection of Claim 19 has been obviated.

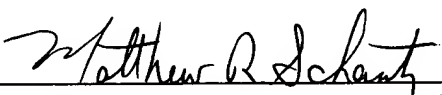
CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that all claims are in a condition for allowance, and respectfully request a prompt Notice of Allowance for all pending claims. It should be understood that the above remarks are not intended to provide an exhaustive basis for

patentability or concede the basis for the rejections in the Office Action, but are simply provided to overcome the rejections made in the outstanding Office Action in the most expedient fashion.

No additional claim fees are believed to be required with this Amendment. A two-month extension of time in which to reply (to and including October 18, 2004) is requested, for which a \$430.00 is required. A form authorizing a payment by credit card of \$430.00 is therefore enclosed herewith. No further fees are believed necessary; nevertheless, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees due, including statutory fees for extensions of time, to Deposit Account No. 23-3030, but not to include any payment of issue fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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